

English Language Instruction in Elementary Schools: What Can We Learn From Korea?

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Good afternoon. I am very happy to see so many of you here tonight. Let me begin by telling you how wonderful it is to personally visit your beautiful campus for the first time. As many of you know, our two universities, Hakuoh University and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), have grown close in recent years and now have student exchanges. There are, right now in this audience, four students from IUPUI, and on the IUPUI campus which I left last week, there are two Hakuoh students currently studying. This is an arrangement that benefits both universities. I wish to thank Vice-Chairman Joji Kamioka and Professor Jeff Miller for the efforts they have made to bring our two universities together, and for their invitation to speak here today. I am happy that my talk today continues to build on this cooperation and exchange.

The Japanese Ministry of Education is planning on implementing English instruction in elementary schools. The Republic of Korea already has gained ten years of experience with English instruction in that situation. The topic of my presentation is what we can learn from the Korean model of English instruction at the elementary school level. Before my visit here I was in

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Korea, and spoke with a number of experts on Korean language education. They told me about both the weaknesses and strong points of the Korean experience with English instruction in elementary schools. Prior to my trip to Asia I researched the ample studies made by Korean scholars about the topic of English instruction at the elementary school level. I would like to share with you today the lessons learned from my research.

Here is an overview of my talk.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">1 . The Korean Experience<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. English InstructionB. Teacher Training2 . What Lessons Can Be Learned? |
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I will start by describing the actual instruction of English in Korean elementary schools, and also another important element, teacher training. Then I will look at what can be learned from the successes and failures of the Korean experience. Before I go into those details, I'd like to present an overview of the situation that led to the introduction of English instruction in elementary schools in Korea.

1. The Korean Experience

Reasons for introduction of English at elementary school level:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">1988 OlympicsGlobalizationKorea's particular characteristics
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The 1988 Olympics were a watershed event in Korea, much as the 1964 Tokyo Olympics marked the end of an era and the beginning of a new period in Japan's national life. Before the 1988 Olympics, Korea looked inward; after the 1988 Olympics, there was a strong tendency to adopt a more global view.

This led to the Globalization Campaign of the 1990s. This was pushed especially by the then-president of Korea, Kim Yong-Sam. The motivation for globalization of citizens was probably as much economic as social, but the effect on decisions of the Ministry of Education was substantial.

The final reason for Korea's decision to introduce English instruction in elementary schools involves Korea's position as a peninsular nation. Since Korea is bordered on three sides by the sea, it shares some of the characteristics of Japan, an island nation. However, it is connected by a land border to the Asian mainland, and so the country of Korea feels strongly the presence of its neighbors Russia and China. Indeed, Koreans sometimes say they are a minnow among the whales of Russia, China, and Japan. In that situation they feel a strong need to communicate with the world but they realize they cannot speak Korean to do so – no one other than Koreans speak Korean around the world. The English language has thus become a tool to help Koreans survive and prosper in the modern world.

Let me move on to the actual introduction of English instruction. Just as in Japan, English language instruction in Korea has been an established part of the curriculum in middle schools and in high schools for many years. But I'd like to go over the timeline of introduction of English at the elementary school level. You see the essential dates in outline below.

Timeline

1991—Ministry allows English as an elective

(outside the regular curriculum)
1997—English instruction implemented
3rd grade only
2000—English instruction in grades 3-6
2001—3rd, 4th grade hours reduced by half
5th & 6th grade hours continue at 68 hours
(Paik, 2005)

Starting in 1991, the Ministry of Education allowed English to be considered an unofficial subject in schools. This meant English could be treated as a club activity, as an after-school program, or offered through the volunteer activities of teachers, parents, and students. This guidance from the Ministry of Education recognized the importance of English in early education but did not yet place it in the national curriculum. This approach may be seen as a preparation leading to official placement of English into the elementary school curriculum. When the decision to officially implement English was taken a few years later, it was phased in step-by-step.

In 1997 the Ministry of Education implemented English instruction in all third-grade elementary classes nationally. The next year, in the next phase of the implementation, English instruction was added to the fourth grade as well. The following year, in 1999, English was taught at the third grade, fourth grade, and fifth grade level. In this way, by the year 2000 all grades from 3rd grade through 6th grade had English instruction.

The introduction was not without problems, however. Parents and teachers reported that students suffered from pressure because of the addition of English to the curriculum load of courses such as arithmetic, history, and national (Korean) language skills. In response to this concern,

in 2001 the Ministry reduced the hours of English instruction for 3rd and 4th grades from two class units a week to one class unit⁽¹⁾ a week. Since there are 34 weeks in the academic year in Korea, this meant a reduction of English instruction in the 3rd and 4th grade of elementary school from 68 class hours to 34 class hours. However, instruction in 5th grade and 6th grade remained at two units per week, or 68 hours in total per academic year. That is where the instruction load remains to this day.

Specifics of English Instruction

Two Systems

Home room teachers teach English

Specialized EFL teachers teach multiple classes

Elementary schools have a choice of either system

(Paik 2005)

And how is English instruction carried out in Korea? There are two systems for delivering instruction. In the first system, each home room teacher is responsible for teaching her own class the English language. In the second system, a teacher at the school is chosen (or volunteers) to be the specialized English teacher. This teacher then receives extra training and takes responsibility for teaching many classes of English at the school. The Ministry of Education and local provincial education authorities allow elementary schools to implement either system according to their choice.

(1) Each class unit is actually 40 minutes long. Units are rounded to class hours for ease of presentation.

Curriculum

Until 2001

English instruction with the communicative approach

From 2001

Added emphasis on learning culture

Small group activities

(Kim 2001)

The Sixth National Curriculum, developed in 1992 and implemented in the mid-1990s, called for communicative language teaching in English instruction. The Seventh National Curriculum, developed in 1997 and implemented beginning in 2001, retained the call for communicative language instruction and placed additional emphasis on learning the culture of native English speaking countries, as well as calling for language learning through small group activities. I will present more on this matter of communicative language learning and small group work later, when I examine the ideal and the reality in Korean elementary school instruction of English.

Just as with middle school and high school English instruction, the Ministry of Education prepared a list of words that all student are expected to learn by the end of each year of elementary level instruction in English (see outline below). While 3rd graders may learn more than 100 words in school, they are tested on, and expected to know, the 100 words chosen by the curriculum planners. In 4th grade an additional 100 words are learned; in 5th and 6th grades the number of new words is raised to 150 each year. Thus, by the end of elementary school, all students are expected to know a core vocabulary of 500 words. One result of introducing this elementary-level

vocabulary is that middle school and high school vocabulary targets were revised to contain more advanced vocabulary items, since middle school students now begin their studies with the basic words already learned.

Vocabulary of 500 words

3rd grade 100 words

4th grade 100 additional words

5th grade 150 additional words

6th grade 150 additional words

(Paik 2005 p.79)

The official national curriculum also sets forth a syllabus that presents language as functions. The listing below presents the targets for functional skills at each grade level. As can be seen, the third-grade functions are focused on self-expression. By the sixth grade, the target functions (such as describing past actions, expressing disagreement, and reporting other's utterances) are more socially interactive and rather sophisticated.

Functional Syllabus

Grade 3: Expressing personal feelings, greeting & leave-taking, introducing oneself, expressing gratitude, making requests & suggestions, giving instructions, forbidding, issuing commands, asking about & describing people and things

Grade 4: Expressing wants or capability/incapability; expressing wishes, describing present actions

Grade 5: Expressing concerns for others, congratulating, making appointments, inviting, making a phone call, giving or inquiring directions

Grade 6: Receiving visitors, comparing, offering food or drinks, describing past actions, expressing agreement/disagreement, reporting other's utterances

(Paik 2005: p.79)

In the same manner that the functional skills have been phased in step-by-step, so also the language skills have been phased in stepwise. As the schedule below shows, 3rd graders learn listening and speaking skills, but do not yet contend with reading or writing. In the 4th grade reading instruction begins, and writing skills are introduced in the 5th grade. By the 6th grade all four skills are routinely used and integrated.

<u>Skills focus</u>	
3 rd grade	4 th grade
speaking	reading added
listening	
5 th grade	6 th grade
writing added	all four skills
(all four skills)	

I stated earlier in my talk that I would re-visit the matter of the communicative language learning approach as an ideal. The approach is mandated by the 7th National Curriculum that is currently in force, and stresses more attention to the function of language than attention to form

(so that spelling or pronunciation are not considered as important as successfully communicating); encourages the use of real materials rather than materials designed for classroom use; stresses learner interaction with others (either other learners in the classroom or with others outside the classroom); emphasizes the learning process (so that attention is paid to *how* one learns rather than to deadlines or products); and recommends linking classroom communication with language use outside of the classroom (for example through email or video exchanges, or the use of English with non-Koreans in Korea). The intent is summarized in the outline below.

Theory of ideal instruction

Current 7th National Curriculum focus:

The communicative learning approach

Function over form

Authentic materials

Learner interaction

Learning process emphasis

Link of classroom with communication beyond classroom

Explicit culture topics and training

The final item of emphasis in the 7th National Curriculum involves explicit, rather than implicit, learning of culture. This puts teachers in the position of lecturing on, or using materials focusing upon, the culture of English-speaking countries. For a full study of differences between the 6th and 7th National Curricula, and a review of their implementation, see Kim (2001).

What happens when we compare this ideal target of instruction with reality? According to Kim (2005), who takes a critical view in her study of English instruction in Korea, there are great differences between

implementation in rural schools and implementation in urban areas, where greater resources, better-trained and more experienced faculty, and even the expectations of parents and students, may lead to greater ease in implementing communicative approaches.

Teacher Training

As stated earlier, there are two systems for English teaching in elementary schools: one in which each home room teacher teaches English to her own class, and the other in which a single teacher is appointed to teach English to all classes. The corresponding teacher training for each system is outlined below. It is important to note that currently only specialized English teachers receive training overseas. This has the intended effect of raising both the English proficiency of these teachers and their level of cultural knowledge about at least one English-speaking country. In both cases the training is typically in-service, that is, it takes place in the summer or winter vacation periods and is provided by the Ministry of Education (and local education authorities) to teachers who already have positions in the public school system.

Training program length: 120 hours

Program types:

- 1) General (for home room teachers)
 - a) 35 hours methods instruction
 - b) 85 hours conversational English
- 2) Intensive (for specialized English teachers)

Conversational English only

(4 weeks in US, Canada, England, or Australia)

This teacher training, whether domestic for home room teachers or overseas for specialized English teachers, has three purposes. As outlined below, the first aim is to raise awareness of English language education.

Purposes of training

1. Raise awareness of elementary English education
2. Improve teachers' communicative skills
3. Instruct about curriculum and methodology

(Park 2006: p.192)

The first aim means that the training is designed to increase motivation and acceptance for the teaching of English at elementary school level. By having teachers attend the training, the Ministry has the expectation that resistance to the mandated policy of English education at the elementary school level will be reduced. This aim comes from the fact that many ordinary citizens, and some elementary school teachers, view the instruction as a burden and one for which ordinary teachers are not prepared.

The second aim is to improve the ability of teachers to use English themselves, especially in terms of communication rather than of form. In other words, the training is designed to help teachers *use* the language rather than to know *about* the language.

The third aim is to impart useful pedagogical methods to teachers, such as how to develop lesson plans, how to organize small group communicative exercises, and how to use as teaching material authentic written or authentic recorded material, etc. This is important for teachers who have no prior experience of communicative language learning or teaching, as it both increases their ability to implement the national curriculum, and gives them added confidence in their instructional role in the classroom.

There are several completed studies by scholars investigating the experiences of Korean elementary teachers undergoing Ministry of Education-sponsored training. Other studies have surveyed teachers who recently completed such training. Perhaps the greatest problem reported by teachers is their own perceived lack of proficiency in English. Studies or surveys by Choi (1991), Woo (2001), Kim (2005), and Paik (2005) all report a lack of English proficiency as the greatest concern of teachers receiving in-service training.

While lack of proficiency in English is the greatest problem that teachers list regarding their teacher training, the list below outlines other problems as well. In particular, for those home room teachers receiving training domestically, the lack of knowledge about the cultures of English-speaking countries can be tied directly to another concern, their lack of experience in visiting or living overseas.

Greatest perceived problem: Lack of English proficiency

Other perceived problems:

Lack of specific culture training

Lack of overseas experience

Lack of qualified native-speaker teacher trainers

The final problem that recurs in all surveys or studies of teacher training is the lack of qualified and effective native-speaker teachers. This problem appears to be of concern *both* for those teachers receiving training in Korea, and those who receive training overseas. In the case of domestic training, the native-speaking teachers offering training appear not to have clear grounding in communicative pedagogy or in other effective methodology; in the case of overseas training, the native speaker trainers use English at

a level too advanced or too rapid for the proficiency level of the teachers in training.

In a survey by Butler (undated) as outlined below, teachers in a training program for elementary school English instruction named their greatest concerns. Since the 3rd and 4th grade levels receive instruction only in speaking and listening, teachers have great concern regarding how to effectively teach these skills. In many cases, the teachers themselves learned English through concentration on form (memorization, writing, and translation) so converting their skills to handle oral English instruction is naturally the highest-ranking concern.

Butler Survey (204 teachers): Greatest Concerns

Improving instructional competency in teaching oral skills

Developing effective activities and lesson plans

Teaching to different student proficiencies

Teaching English through the English language

Other concerns include instruction on how to develop effective lesson plans. While these teachers may have experience in creating daily lesson plans for other subjects, language instruction, particularly communicative language instruction, challenges most teachers.

Another concern identified by those teachers surveyed is the matter of reaching students with widely differing proficiencies. This comes about because families with resources generally start private English instruction for their children at pre-school level, and thus a number of children come into the 3rd grade with considerable English proficiency gained through such private instruction or tutoring. Other students are truly beginning English at the 3rd grade, with the resulting challenge to teachers to effectively address

the learning needs of both proficiency groups.

As can be seen in the listing above, the fourth-ranked concern found in Butler's survey is how to teach English using the English language. Most teachers have not studied the phrases of classroom English that a native speaker would apply in the classroom and so feel awkward using untried phrases in classroom management and in pragmatically challenging situations such as giving advice, encouragement, or remonstrance.

The survey listed below in outline found that when teachers were asked what they wanted from teacher training, classroom English skills were placed above communicative language skills. This confirms the concern teachers have about using English for class management within the classroom. Perhaps related to this, teachers found observation of experienced teachers the most useful aspect of teacher training. Recommendations from these teachers in training included learning about the culture of English-speaking countries directly from native speaker trainers, and having native speaker trainers match their language delivery to the listening comprehension skills of the teachers in training.

Park (2006) surveyed 200 teachers during in-service training and most:

Wanted to learn classroom English more than communicative skills

Found observation of experienced classroom teachers most useful

Their recommendations:

Learn culture through native speaker trainers

Native speaker trainers must match lessons to teacher proficiency

A summary of the literature on teacher training for elementary teachers of English generates the outline list of suggestions below.

Teacher-generated Solutions/Suggestions:

Better pre-service training in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Better in-service training

Language camps in-country

More overseas training

It can be seen that teachers have a great deal of concern about their ability to teach English using the communicative approach. This is probably because few learned English through this approach during their own schooling and so desire a firm grounding through observation and practice. To improve training, teachers suggest either establishing language camps in Korea to which teachers can go for an all-English environment and training by native speakers of English, or else an increase in the numbers of teachers sent overseas to English-speaking countries for training.

2. What Lessons Can Be Learned?

In regard to the process and content of English language instruction in elementary schools, the outline below lists the key points to be learned from the Korean experience.

English in Elementary Schools

Start Grade by Grade

Avoid Heavy Burden on Students

Ensure Adequate Funding

Realize Results Depend on the Context and the Local School Culture

The grade by grade introduction of English instruction in Korea was a successful way to avoid overburdening the logistic and pedagogic resources of elementary schools, and if Japan decides to adopt English instruction at this level, a similar one-grade-each-year approach seems advisable. This approach, which would mean taking four years to implement from 3rd grade through 6th grade (or six years if implementation is from 1st grade through 6th grade) also permits more time for teacher training, which as we will see below is an important aspect to the introduction of English instruction.

It is equally wise to limit younger children to a single class hour of English each week, with only 5th graders and 6th graders studying two class hours per week. This avoids the burden that English study adds to a curriculum that is already challenging for some children.

The Korean experience suggests that it is important to have equitable funding in place so that rural schools are not disadvantaged when introducing English instruction. In this regard, Japan's record appears to be quite good already, but attention must be given to counterbalance the advantages that urban schools naturally have due to more access to native speakers and easier access to environments in which authentic materials and interaction with English speakers are abundant. This may be overcome in part by technological investments, such as in computers and language learning software, in rural schools.

Another lesson to take from the Korean experience is to realize that no matter how equitably English instruction, experienced teachers, and teaching materials are distributed and implemented by the Ministry of Education, there will always be some variability in the outcome. Differences in resources, environments, and parental attitudes and backgrounds will all bring about differences at the individual school level in the measurable average proficiency of students, and society must be accepting of these

differences in order for English instruction to continue in the schools. ⁽²⁾

In the matter of teacher training, the lessons that Japan can learn from Korea are summarized below.

Effective Teacher Training Must be Developed in Advance, to include:

English for Use in the Classroom

Methods for Instructing Young Learners

Curriculum and Lesson Plan Models

Overseas Intensive Courses

Matching Training to Teachers' English Proficiency Level

Including Observation of Classroom Teaching

The chief lesson is that teacher training should be in place well before implementation of the instruction. Such training should include classroom English, so that teachers feel comfortable using familiar phrases and commands in English in teaching, in advising students, and in classroom management.

Teacher training should also include pedagogical guidance so that teachers are well-versed in how to prepare a language education daily lesson plan and in how to apply various communicative-approach methods to language instruction. Every teacher should be practiced and confident to deliver instruction using small group activities, games, songs, literature, pictures, and other means to reach young learners.

(2) In 1997 the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) issued a report that called upon the government to delay implementation of the planned English instruction at elementary school level and questioned the potential effectiveness of such instruction. In the same year, 1997, the Ministry of Education started implementation of English instruction, effectively voiding the report. A search of the KEDI Website (www.kedi.re.kr) shows that the report is no longer available for download.

The final lesson from the Korean experience with teacher training is that there will be a strong demand for overseas training. This demand arises both from a desire on the part of teachers to improve their English oral proficiency, and a desire to be better able to teach about the culture of English-speaking countries. In any such training, the native-English speaking trainers must be carefully selected or carefully monitored to ensure that their instruction delivery matches the comprehension ability of the trainees. This will usually be attained by selecting teacher trainers with experience overseas, ideally with experience living or teaching in Japan. Such overseas training programs should also include observation of actual language classrooms (English or other languages) so that trainees can see language teaching methods in practice.

This concludes my talk on the topic of the Korean experience with English instruction at the elementary school level. My hosts here at Hakuoh University have also consented to me introducing Indiana, IUPUI, and our center to you. So, I would like to switch topics here and close with an introduction that will make you familiar with the place that I have come from, and where Hakuoh students currently are studying.

As you see from the map, Indiana is located in the center of the United States. The star is the capital city, Indianapolis. As you see, it is located in the middle of the state. Can you guess what this big oval track is? It's the site of the Indianapolis 500 automobile race, the Indy 500. Have you heard of that race? This track is right in the city, about five kilometers from IUPUI.

Here you can see the IUPUI campus. Some of the IUPUI students here can tell you what this large building is. That's right, it's the main library. You can see how broad and green the campus is. It's a very modern campus, close to downtown. You can see the skyscrapers of downtown just beyond the campus. It's a five-minute walk to downtown from the campus. This map

shows the White River, which is the western border of the campus. So the campus is next to the downtown area on the east, and the river on the west.

In this building is located our center, the Indiana Center for Intercultural Communication. Those of you who came for English training last September will recognize this building. We call our center ICIC, and it is a linguistic research and training center located in the Department of English, in the School of Liberal Arts. Our training programs use an English for Specific Purposes approach and each summer we offer the English for Specific Purposes Institute. The well-known scholar Dr. Ulla Connor is director of the center.

Some examples of training our center offers or has offered are the American culture training for Hakuoh University, the Women in Leadership program for Tsuda Women's College, the Business English training for Institut National Polytechnique (Ivory Coast), and English for finance and economics training for the Chinese Ministry of Finance. Here is a photo from our Hakuoh training last September. Do you recognize anyone in the photograph? Here's another of a field trip. I see you know some of the students in the picture.

I hope that many of you will get a chance to visit and study at IUPUI. You are always welcome to visit our campus and our center. That concludes my presentation. Thank you.

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Reflections on Dr. Rozycki's lecture and elementary school English

"Dr. Rozycki's lecture about South Korean English education in elementary schools was like the video we saw in Professor Takizawa's class. I was very surprised that the Korean students could use English so well.... In contrast to them, I started to study English when I was in junior high school. As I want to be a junior high school English teacher in Japan, I was interested in the topic."

Ms. Eri Akimoto

"I thank Dr. Rozycki for his presentation to us about Korean English education in elementary schools.... When I was an elementary student I didn't know any English, but graduating Korean primary students know 500 words! I think that we Japanese are now too satisfied with our easy lives.... Without resources, Japan has to depend on English for communication to trade with other countries."

Mr. Haruka Gonmori

"One thing that interested me about Dr. Rozycki's talk was the fixed, regular learning goals that lead to efficient teaching in South Korea.... I think that some Japanese English education doesn't suit students who are moved up before they fully understand. As a result, these students cannot follow lessons and come to dislike English. We had better follow the Korean education model."

Mr. Kenta Inami

"I want to be an English teacher, that is why Dr. Rozycki's talk was so interesting. He gave us many examples of how to create a progressive and

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efficient English education program here in Japan. I think that Korean's current English education system is very highly developed."

Mr. Yoshichika Kimura

"I was really impressed that Korean third graders learn 100 English words, fourth graders learn 100 more, and fifth and sixth graders are taught 150 more in each year. This totals 500 words! However, in Japan we have some problems. One problem is that there are too few English teachers, especially in elementary schools.... Thank you, Dr. Rozycki, for coming and speaking to us."

Ms. Chiemi Kon

"Dr. Rozycki explained about Korea's successful English education.... I think elementary school English education is clearly needed here. In Japan's English education system now many students only learn grammar, but cannot make simple conversation sentences. I agree with Professor Miller that English should be used primarily for speaking to communicate with others."

Mr. Kazushige Kondo

"When I listened to Dr. Rozycki's lecture, I thought that it was a clever idea in Korea to focus elementary school English classes on a sequence of skills; for example, speaking and listening in grade 3, reading in grade 4, and all four skills in grades 5 and 6. Certainly, the youngest students can't follow difficult ideas."

Mr. Junya Nagashima

"I was surprised at the opportunities Korean teachers have to receive extra training after completing their teaching practice. The length of

training is 120 hours of instruction: 35 hours of methodology and 85 hours of conversation! In my opinion, there is a lot of merit in training elementary school teachers well, so that the children can really enjoy learning English.”

Ms. Maria Nakajima

“After I listened to Dr. Rozycki’s presentation, I changed my mind and came to believe that it would be better if we had a similar early English education program in Japan (Korea began ten years ago)! I used to fear that too much English might confuse children: however, it seems that early English learning is not connected to the steady development of one’s mother tongue ability.”

Ms. Chitose Namba

“Dr. Rozycki’s lecture benefited me much as I want to work in an elementary school in the future. South Korea has a good program.... I was especially impressed by the “communicative learning approach” which uses music, newspapers, songs, and cultural topics like food and festivals.... Like in Korea, when I teach children English, I want them to enjoy what they are studying.”

Ms. Haruka Osodo

“I learned a lot of things from Dr. Rozycki’s lecture, first I realized how developed Korean’s English instruction in elementary school is, especially compared to the education in Japan. I was surprised at this.... To study English is very useful for the future, so Korea’s ideas are very advanced, I think.”

Ms. Nozomi Otsuka

“I was especially impressed by the three purposes of Korean elementary school English teacher training: to raise student awareness of English, to improve the teachers’ communicative skills, and curriculum and methodology training.... In his lecture, Dr. Rozycki said that each English teacher must be good – with much skill and experience. I completely agree with him on this point!”

Ms. Kiyomi Oyadomari

“I was fascinated by the afternoon lecture because I want to become a teacher with strong English skills.... As Korean English education in grade three began in 1997, present university freshmen there are now in their eleventh year of English.... As a future English teacher, I want Japan’s English elementary education to catch up with that of South Korea.”

Ms. Akie Sato

“I think that for elementary English education, the best way for children to learn is by having many chances to use the language. The more we use English the more our skills improve and the desire to learn English becomes stronger. I think we should have focused on elementary education some years ago, like neighboring South Korea.”

Ms. Risa Sato

“Dr. Rozycki’s lecture was particularly interesting about how South Korea has successfully introduced early English education step-by-step. I hope that we will do so too. Japan has finally announced a program for children to learn English from fifth grade. This will be good for us and for the outside world.”

Ms. Yuna Sato

“I was both surprised and disappointed by this lecture.... I want to be an elementary English teacher, but English has not officially started here yet. We are trailing behind South Korea in teaching needed English skills.... Compared with Korea, I think that Japan depends on foreign Assistant Language Teachers too much, Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) should have more confidence.”

Ms. Yoko Shimada

“I think that English education in elementary schools in Japan must include teacher training. Moreover, especially homeroom teachers must improve their English skills. Also, this was my first time listening to a guest lecture entirely in English, so I could learn how to make an effective presentation.... Dr. Rozycki’s lecture was a benefit for me, and I was lucky to be able to listen to him.”

Ms. Ayana Sugano

“What I found interesting in Dr. Rozycki’s talk was that children are intelligent enough to learn English without failing to learn difficult words and terms in Korean (or Japanese) because their brains are developing and they can learn almost anything automatically. So Korea will develop even more than now.”

Mr. Takayuki Susa

“Korean English education is considered important for society, so Korea started English instruction in elementary schools.... If Japanese society doesn’t do so too, we will not be able to compete in tomorrow’s global society. For example, many individuals in business and politics need high level English skills to be able to communicate with other people in foreign

countries.”

Ms. Keiko Suwa

“From Dr. Rozycki’s lecture I learned that: although our two countries are similar, Korea has made greater progress than Japan in English education... because Koreans want to communicate a lot with foreign cultures.... I was surprised to hear about the gap between urban and rural schools in Korea, in terms of the quality of education. I wonder how much of a problem this is in Japan.”

Ms. Sayaka Takahashi

“I think that South Korean English education is very active and positive. If we don’t study English like this in Japan, we will not be able to globalize effectively.... Both my parents, an elementary school teacher and a junior high school teacher, say that English education in elementary schools is very simple, but the classes are interesting for the children. This is important, I think.”

Mr. Kosuke Takanashi

“I didn’t know that there was such a great difference between Japanese and Korean English education until I listened to this lecture. Also the TOEIC and TOEFL scores in Korea are higher than those in Japan. I think that the reason is the introduction of early English education.... As it is difficult to master English in a short time, to be successful we must begin English in elementary school.”

Ms. Makiko Tsutsumi

“For me, the most interesting topic in Dr. Rozycki’s talk was that Korean

primary school students learn 500 English vocabulary words before junior high school. This is important because reading in junior high school depends on having a sufficient vocabulary. (I felt that my English was poor for that reason.)”

Mr. Yuusuke Uetake

“It goes without saying that English is the most important common language used in our world. Therefore, I was impressed by South Korea’s clear system of early childhood English education, especially their systematic teacher training.... I think that we English Education majors have to learn more English and also about other useful education systems – especially those in Asia.”

Ms. Emiko Watanabe

Afterward

Dr. Bill Rozycki’s excellent December 13, 2007 lecture to over 75 Hakuoh students and faculty members was a significant milestone from at least five perspectives. First and foremost, his profound insights into the reality of South Korea’s much vaulted elementary school English program have given the Tochigi Board of Education and us much to consider, especially now that Japan’s Ministry of Education and Science (MEXT) has committed to introducing a somewhat similar program into the fifth and sixth grades in 2011. By his linking of the Korean elementary school English program to that country’s global situation regarding China, Russia and Japan, their resulting governmental English education strategy, the actual nuts and bolts of the program (e.g. who does the teaching and how are they trained), as well as a chronology of how the various objectives were modified to best

realize student needs, we could better understand the development and pitfalls of Korea's ambitious system.

Furthermore, by using studies to probe beneath the surface of Korea's well-know successes; for example, Sung-Hee Park's 2006 research dealing with teacher resistance to the English program and what in-service teachers see as their greatest needs, it becomes more possible for Japan to proactively move to minimize similar problems early. Frankly, I was also quite surprised by some South Korean English teachers' reluctance to adopt more communicative approaches of instruction and abandon their reliance on traditional memorization and grammar-translation methodology that they had experienced as students. From my own work as a MEXT English teacher training (see Miller, 2007), this is still a major problem among many teachers over 40 years old in Japan.

The excellent conclusions of the presentation: begin slowly – grade by grade, be sure to fund adequately, do not overburden students, respect differences in local school cultures, as well as the need to develop effective teacher training in advance of actual instruction, clearly point the way for Japan to proceed. Dr. Rozycki has very deftly answered the important question "What we can learn from Korea?" The rest is up to all of us involved in English education in Japan.

And it is in this regard that, secondly, as a result of this paper, the video taping of the lecture, and a short write-up in *The Shimotsuke Shimibun* on December 15th, these ideas will resonate among many key groups for some time to come. Dr. Rozycki's erudite ideas will continue to influence the Tochigi Board of Education (which has requested copies of the handouts and video tape), and through subsequent Board of Education in-service training be passed on to elementary school teachers, as well as to future Hakuoh English Education majors studying with us to become teachers. In

fact, twice this coming August, first at the Tochigi Education Center with Professor Kenzo Takizawa and later at Hakuoh University with Professors Takizawa and Harry Harris, I will have the opportunity to use selections from this paper and the video to help Tochigi JTEs better motivate and educate their students.

The third perspective is already contained in this paper, directly above in the comments by 24 freshmen English Education majors about Dr. Rozycki's presentation. It is extremely rare for undergraduate students to have input into published research, but I am quite pleased with the depth of their analyses. Not only are their thoughts insightful, but also, as recent high school graduates, they are more knowledgeable than us older people about the current realities of schooling. Additionally, being motivated by a desire to become English teachers themselves, the content of the lecture was very meaningful for them. (As their Intermediate Writing teacher, I did smooth out any grammar and syntax errors, however the ideas and most of the wording are that of the freshmen students' themselves.)

In another paper, *Current Classroom Concerns and Educational Needs of Japanese High School English Teachers: An Analysis of 248 Board of Education Questionnaires From Okinawa Prefecture* (on pages 137 to 160 in this volume), I worked even more closely with two freshmen students analyzing, cross-referencing, and identifying concerns from the large volume of teacher opinions. In retrospect, I found that the young students were sensitive to a number of areas that I would have overlooked. Furthermore, as students themselves they were better able to empathize with the learners. Therefore, although I do not plan to write two papers at the same time in the foreseeable future, I would very much like to structure new research projects in such a way that encourage undergraduate students to actively take part. Such an arrangement will provide an authentic opportunity to use English, help

prepare students for graduate studies in Japan or abroad, considerably broaden my understanding of L2 learner issues, and develop camaraderie among the English Education majors.

The fourth element of Dr. Rozycki's December 13th presentation was as a concrete manifestation of the ever-deepening relationship between IUPUI and Hakuoh University. As Bill mentioned at the beginning of his talk, not only were three Indiana students (Messrs. Joshua Grumbling, Brian Young, and Chris Lupkin) in the audience when he spoke, but also two Hakuoh students (Ms. Marina Yamashita and Ms. Eri Kumagai) were studying in IUPUI's School of Liberal Arts. Ironically, while Bill was in South Korea finishing up his research on elementary school English education, Marina in Indianapolis was "acing" an astonishing five courses that would catapult her onto Bob White's IUPUI Dean's List! Also, although Hakuoh's Law Faculty has already had several distinguished English guest lecturers whose presentations were later published in Hakuoh's Law Journal, Dr. Rozycki was the first to speak to the Faculty of Education (as well as to publish in the faculty's journal). We very much hope to make this an annual event, but this first occasion will always remain special.

From April of 2008, the fifth group of IUPUI students have arrived at Hakuoh for six months or a year of intensive Japanese studies. These three new students, the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth respectively (two women and a man), will follow the same full-scholarship program of Japanese language, culture, and International Relations that began in April of 2005 with the first three IUPUI students: Ms. Laura Woods, Mr. Stephen Costlow, and Mr. Kyle McLain.

Looking back, after her year at Hakuoh, Laura returned and graduated from IUPUI with a major in Japanese, which was not possible before the Hakuoh program existed. Then Hakuoh University Ashikaga High School,

one of the 102 nationally MEXT designated Super English Language High Schools (SELHis), hired Ms. Woods as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) of English. Not only did she attend and help present at regional SELHi conferences, but Ms. Woods also successfully passed the second level of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (1,000 Chinese ideographs and 6,000 Japanese words) and is now preparing for the first, and highest, level (2,000 Chinese ideographs and 10,000 Japanese words). Laura will be leaving her post at the Hakuoh University affiliated high school this summer to go to graduate school in Indiana University Bloomington, to further study Japanese. However, her replacement ALT will be Matthew Ross who was in the third group from IUPUI to study at Hakuoh.

Mr. Stephen Costlow, with a Hakuoh University foreign Nepali student friend and March 2008 Hakuoh graduate, gave a multi-media presentation on Tochigi, Nepal, and Indiana to a large group of regional business and academic persons in December of 2005. Later, Stephen returned to Hakuoh, at his own expense, to create two interactive DVDs about the Hakuoh exchange student experience subtitled in Japanese, Chinese, and English.

Mr. Kyle McLain transferred from IUPUI to Hakuoh in 2006, graduated from our Business Management Faculty on March 25, 2008 and has joined a subdivision of Yahoo Japan. I suspect that Kyle is the first Indiana student, who is not part Japanese, to graduate from a major Japanese university. Kyle was very helpful when the Hakuoh students studied at Dr. Rozycki's IUPUI shorter language programs in 2005 and 2007, as well as during the Tochigi governmental visits to Indianapolis in 2005 and 2006. In September of 2006, when Hakuoh's Vice Chairman Joji Kamioka and I were part of Tochigi Governor Fukuda's official delegation, Kyle got to know both Governor Fukuda and Governor Daniels quite well. At the very least, it will be quite interesting to see how Kyle McLain's career between Indiana and Tochigi

develops from 2008.

For the fifth and last perspective of Dr. Rozycki's lecture we must move from the very narrow focus of how individual students have been internationalized by the IUPUI-Hakuoh nexus to the much broader question of the future of English learning in Asia. In *English Next: Why global English may mean the end of 'English as a foreign language'* published in 2006 by the British Council, author David Graddol asserts that "in many countries extensive curriculum reforms are taking place as economies build the capacity required to operate in a globalised world.... (But that) the state desires to maintain social order, (and) to act as guardian of national identity." (Graddol, pages 70 and 71) Additionally, the growth of a large urban middle class, especially in India and China, combined with modern technology has created a 'flat world' in which English has become an essential basic skill, like mathematics or computer literacy.

As a result, the "age at which children start learning English has been lowering across the world.... from the traditional 'foreign languages' slot to lower secondary school to primary school – even pre-school.... the intention is often to create a bilingual population.... (The educational company) Benesse... reported that, in 2005, 21% of 5-year-olds in Japan attended English conversation classes – up from 6% in 2000. This trend is typical of many Asian countries." (Graddol, pages 88 and 89) Furthermore, "China's decision to make English a key part of its strategy for economic development has had a galvanizing impact on neighboring countries. By the end of 2005, Thailand, the Philippines, Japan and Taiwan were all expressing grave anxiety about their national proficiency in English and had announced new educational initiatives." (Graddol, page 95)

Please note that conspicuously absent from the above list of China's neighbors worried about their students' English is South Korea. Have they

somehow gotten it right? In his February 10, 2008 plenary address “Changes Proposed by MEXT for English Education in Japan” at Temple University’s Applied Linguistics Colloquium, Professor Kensaku Yoshida, Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Studies at Sophia University, began with 2005-2006 iBT TOEFL data showing that Japan had the “lowest score (out of 28 nations) in Asia and the lowest score in speaking in the world (out of 147 countries).” Japan’s iBT score was 65 (=513), Taiwan’s was 71 (=528), South Korea’s was 72 (=533), and China’s was 76 (=544); for speaking (the third test component), Japan’s score was 15, Taiwan and Korea’s were 17 each, and China’s was 18.

Most importantly, these results were from Asian test takers in the U.S., who were applying to educational institutions there. In terms of the total number of test takers from Asia, above Japan (17,957 test takers) were: China (20,450), India (23,750), and South Korea (31,991) – only Taiwan (10,022) had fewer test takers. (In contrast, Taiwan’s population is 18 percent of Japan’s and South Korea’s is 38 percent of Japan’s.) This data goes a long way toward debunking the myth that Japan’s TOEFL score is so low mainly because many Japanese who take the test have no intention of using English. The data demonstrates that Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese students have a higher level of proficiency, especially in oral communication.

Even more disturbing was a 2007 Benesse company survey of 4,718 Parental Attitudes toward English in Elementary Schools. In response to the question, “Do you like English?” 44.3% answered “not very much,” and 10.6% answered “not at all.” In response to the question, “Do you have confidence in using English?” 42.7% answered “not very confident” and 46.3% answered “not at all.” Only 1.2% of the 4,718 parents answered “very much” to the question, “Has the English you learned in school been useful to you?”

Such extreme parental negativity about their past English education does not bode well for their children’s future English learning in Japan. We have

reached a “tipping point” and must learn to teach English differently or Japan’s future is in danger. In contrast, in response to my question about the future of English elementary school education in Korea, Dean Yoshida said that things are going well, with many young students studying abroad and the Korean Education Ministry considering lowering the age English is introduced to grade 1.

Dr. Bill Rozycki has clearly shown us many of the things that we can learn from South Korea’s 11 years of elementary English education. However, it is up to Japan’s Ministry of Education and Science, our local Boards of Education, and us to provide the vision, leadership, and funding to make it work here too.

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